

A Car for All Seasons - 2009 Mazda MX-5 PRHT Grand Touring Edition

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 Friday, 01 May 2009
 Last Updated Wednesday, 06 May 2009

Mazda's MX-5 Miata is the best-selling roadster of all time. Since the model's introduction in 1989, Mazda has built and sold over 800,000 of the plucky little sports cars – with most of them sold here in the United States.

Most of those Miatas sold here are still on the road. Miata owners love their cars with the same intensity that we old sports car enthusiasts still love our Alfa Romeos, Datsun 240Zs, Corvettes and Austin-Healey Sprites. Miata clubs are among the most active marque clubs in the country, with well-attended meetings and driving events virtually every weekend. And of course, the Miata has had a fantastic racing career in SCCA and NASA club racing, becoming one of the most popular race cars in history with the Spec Miata class.

I bought my Miata almost two years ago - a first year model I picked up for \$1500. With 395,000 miles on the clock when I bought it, and over 400,000 miles today, it's still going strong and every feature of the car still works. That's true of an amazing number of the 800,000 Miatas that have been built and sold in the last 20 years, and it goes a long way to explain why Miata owners are so passionate about these little roadsters. As I zoom around town on gorgeous spring days like today, I still can't believe it took me 17 years to get a Miata of my own.

So that's the background to explain why I was so stoked when the press fleet guy pulled into my driveway last week with a 2009 MX-5 Power Retractable Hard Top - Grand Touring edition. This car is the state of the art in Miatas, and it shows that the folks at Mazda have still got the true vision and the chops to reinvent the Miata 20 years later.

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div.mm { width:500px; border:1px solid #E6E6E6; color:#333; background-color:#EEE; padding-bottom:28px; *padding-bottom:0; text-align:left; text-shadow:0 0 0 #000; } .mm div, .mm dl, .mm dt, .mm dd, .mm ul, .mm ol, .mm li, .mm h3 { margin:0; padding:0; } .mm ul { display:block; list-style-type:disc; } .mm ul, .mm ol, .mm dl { font-size:100%; } .mm .clearfix { display:block; } .mm li { font-size:100%; list-style-image:none; list-style-position:outside; list-style-type:none; } .mm p, .mm li { font-size:100%; margin-bottom:12px; } .mm h3 { display:block; margin:1em 0; font-size:133.4%; font-weight:bold; margin-bottom:12px; line-height:24px; } .mm h3, .mm p, .mm dt, .mm dd { padding-left:10px; padding-right:10px; } .mm .borderless { border:medium none !important; padding-bottom:0 !important; } .mm div, .mm dt { display:block; } .mm .matting { background-color:#FFF; border-color:#DDD; border-style:solid; border-width:1px; display:block; margin:0 5px 12px; padding:4px; position:relative; } .mm .car_md .matting { float:left; margin-right:0; } .mm p, .mm dl { display:block; margin:1em 0; } .mm dl { margin-bottom:12px; } .mm .car_md dl { margin-bottom:12px; margin-left:115px; } .mm dt { font-size:125%; line-height:20px; margin-bottom:0; } .mm .car_md dt { font-size:116.667%; font-weight:bold; margin-bottom:0; } .mm ol { display:block; list-style-type:decimal; margin:1em 0; } .mm .clearme { border:medium none; clear:both !important; } .mm ol.generations { clear:both; margin-bottom:0.5em; } .mm ol.generations li { border-bottom:medium none; clear:both; margin-bottom:0; padding:0; *zoom:1; } .mm ol.generations li dl { margin:0; padding-top:0; } .mm ol.generations li dt, .mm ol.generations li dd { line-height:18px; } .mm ol.generations li dt { border-right:1px solid #DDD; float:left; font-size:100%; margin-bottom:0; margin-left:0; padding-bottom:2px; padding-top:2px; text-align:left; } .mm dd { display:block; font-size:100%; margin-bottom:0; line-height:18px; } .mm .car_md dd { margin-bottom:0; } .mm ol.generations li dd { border:medium none; float:left; margin-left:0; padding:2px 0 2px 6px; } .mm ol.generations li dd.first { padding-left:10px; } .mm .price { color:#460 !important; } .mm .pipe { color:#CCC; padding:0 0.3em; } .mm a:hover { text-decoration:underline; } .mm a { color:#06A; } .mm img { display:block; border:0 none; } Mazda Miata 2008 Mazda Miata From 22/27 mpg | MSRP from $20,635 View used Mazda Miata classifieds 2006 - 2008 2006 2007 2008 1999 - 2005 1999 2000 2001 2002 2003 2004 2005 1997 1997
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The 2009 MX-5 has had a light facelift, most apparent in the nose section, where they've given the car a "Bugeye Sprite" grin and aggressive headlight treatment. I think the new look is not better or worse than the previous bodywork, just a little different. The rest of the car is substantially the same as the 2006-2008 edition.

The performance on the MX-5 is generally excellent, and that hasn't changed. The 2-liter engine makes 167 horsepower and 140 pound-feet of torque. With a 7200 RPM redline and an optional 6-speed manual transmission, that's enough to fling the 2,500 pound MX-5 forward at a satisfying clip. Like its Miata predecessors, the MX-5 isn't a 400 horsepower neck-cracker, but rather a classic momentum sports car.

The new MX-5 still handles and brakes like a Miata – there's no fault there. It's still tossable, light, confident, and altogether fun.

Where the MX-5 has really changed over the last 20 years is in the creature comforts. Fans of old british sports cars loved the original Miata's spartan interior, but as we've all gotten a bit older, the heated leather upholstery, AC, Bose stereo, and a somewhat larger passenger cabin are very appealing. This is a car you could drive coast-to-coast and arrive in good shape.

The Power Retractable Hard Top has repelled some Miata purists, but for most of North America, it's a godsend. This device goes up or down in 15 seconds, and when it's up, it's as cozy as any coupe on the market. Plus, it adds only 75 pounds over the curb weight of the soft top version. Best of all, you don't sacrifice your trunk space as you do with so many hardtop convertibles on the market today.

The bottom line on the MX-5 PRHT Grand Touring is that it's the Miata you want today. If you're a sports car enthusiast (and aren't we all?) you need to go take a test drive in one of these. But be warned – if you drive it, you're going to want to take it home. And with the soft economy right now, Mazda dealers are hungry enough that they've been letting go of these cars well under sticker price.